Socialist Worker
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What this dispute is about

THE roots of this strike go back to a reorganisation of work in the ESB in 1986. This involved increased productivity from the electricians.

Management at ESB tried to get away with simply pushing electricians up one point in their pay scale.

But the electricians were giving ongoing concessions and therefore demanded a five percent pay rise. Five percent had already been offered to fitters in the power stations in return for quicker maintenance.

The scale of productivity the electricians have given can be seen in simple facts: employment in the ESB has fallen by 23 percent since 1980—but the amount of electricity generated has gone up by 40 percent.

In reality, the electricians' strike is also an attack on the straitjacket of the Programme for Economic and Social Progress. This miserable three-year deal is designed to prevent any real union activity to force claims on management.

A victory for the electricians will help restore confidence to public sector workers. Public sector workers are already under huge attacks as they are threatened with privatisation and subcontracts. That is why we say:

A VICTORY TO THE ESB WORKERS IS A VICTORY FOR US ALL.

Defend the Electricians

SUPPORT THE ESB STRIKERS

THE Government and the media claim to be dismayed at the hardship caused to ordinary people by the ESB strike.

It is pure hypocrisy.

They had no such concern when they were closing down hospital beds. In many Irish hospitals patients are being treated in corridors due to lack of bed space.

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John Bruton makes great play for his concern about suffering. But this is the same man that wanted to send Irish troops to join the terrible war in the Gulf

Meanwhile, the newspapers and television pour abuse on the strikers and give the ESB management a free ride. We are told absolutely nothing about the causes of the strike.

The reason is that the press is run by the wealthy. Tony O'Reilly, for example, owns the Irish Independent, Sunday World, and the Star. He is also a major shareholder of Waterford Glass. When the Glass workers were on strike, his newspapers were used as propaganda sheets to weaken the strikers. This is the type of "free press" we have in this country.

Superwages for the bosses

OUR rulers are mounting a big attack on the greedy ESB workers. They are a bunch of hypocrites.

■ The former supreme court judge Tom O Higgins has just been awarded £24,0000 a year as a pension. This is on top of a Dail pension of £12,000. Tom being a poor 'worker' is also putting in for another pension from the EC.

■ Frank Wall used to be the secretary of Fianna Fail. So he has to get a little reward on retirement. Wall has just got himself an EC job with a salary of £72,000. All the better placed to pontificate about 'greedy workers'.

■ Now FF are negotiating a special wage for consultants. These work a 22 hour week for £35,000 and now they have put in a wage claim for £50,000 plus.

Meanwhile on the picket line, electricians told *Socialist Worker* about the reality of ESB wages.

'We are young electricians. We come out with £191 gross wages a week. The ESB constantly lays off in order to break our service'

An electrician in the ESB with 10 year service would earn a £100 less than electricians in private firms such as Semperit.

This is the reality of the so called high wage.

WARNING!

★ FIANNA Fail has a long record of attacks on ESB workers.

In 1966, they introduced an Electricity (Special Provisions) Act. This *banned* strikes in the ESB. Workers who defied it were jailed.

This time around any attempt at state repression should be met by an all-out strike from the whole of the ESB.

No army scabs to beat the picket line.

EVERY socialist should be standing up for the ESB strikers. They are the victims of a hate campaign from the media.

But what are the left TDs in the Labour and Workers Party doing? They are joining up with the big business parties of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael to attack the strike.

An all-party Dail statement was issued telling the strikers to go back to work. Pat Rabbitte,of the Workers Party, claimed that this was such a rare display of unity that the workers should 'take appropriate notice' and give up.

What a sell-out.

These people are so busy trying to be moderate that they have as much backbone as the broken spine of a jelly fish.

Pat Rabbitte

What we need in this country is a fighting socialist party. One that stands full square with workers in struggle—no matter how unpopular they are for brief periods.

That is what the Socialist Workers Movement stands for. For more information on its politics tear out the slip below.

I want to know more about the Socialist Workers Movement

Name.....

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Return to SWM: P.O. Box 1648, Dublin 8